

of Kopergaon, Nevása and Shrigonda Ranges of the Ahmednagar Division, which had been submitted to the Conservator last year and was returned by him for revision. While during the working season Mr. Fagan visited forests in the Ahmednagar, Násik and East Khándesh Divisions, and discussed with the respective Divisional Forest Officers the schemes of Working Plans to be applied to the forests of those districts.

36. The proportion of forests in the several divisions which have been differentiated into "forest blocks" and are placed under systematic treatment, is exhibited in the following table:—

No.	Division.	Area of Forest.	Area differentiated up to the end of 1896-97.	Area still remaining.	Percentage of Forest under detailed treatment.
1	East Khándesh...	811	774	37	95.43
2	West do.	1,739	139	1,600	8.01
3	Násik ...	1,279	819	460	64.03
4	Ahmednagar ...	848	428	420	50.47
5	Poona ...	711	464	247	65.26
6	Sátára ...	698	85	613	12.35
7	Sholápur ...	278	8	270	2.87
Total ...		6,364	2,717	3,647	42.68

37. From the above it will be seen that a total area 2,717 square miles has been brought provisionally under Working Plans arrangement up to the close of the year, but only a few of the 40 exploitable compartments, into which each forest block contained within this total area has been subdivided, have been laid out on the ground; and in so far as this state of incompleteness affects the Working Plans, it may justly be said that these Working Plans exist as yet mainly on paper. But the Conservator would, for the reasons explained in paragraph 41 of the Administration Report of the Central Circle for 1895-96, respectfully submit that this is not a serious defect, for to lay out all the 40 compartments on the ground in every forest block in the seven divisions of the Central Circle means to clear vegetation from and erect boundary-marks upon many thousands of linear miles of country, on the flat, as well as up mountain sides, down and across ravines and dales; and it would require the employment of an enormously large establishment of surveyors and measurers to complete this work within the space of the working seasons contained within a decade of years. As far as means will permit the demarcation of compartments on the ground is being pushed, and so long as this demarcation keeps well ahead of the coming year, and discovers no important errors in the large scales forest maps of the Forest Survey in boundaries and areas, as much is being done as is immediately necessary and is possible with the means at command.

#### (b).—ANNUAL PLANS OF OPERATIONS.

38. Each Divisional Forest Officer submitted as usual a general and detailed scheme of forest operations to be undertaken during the year regulated by the funds available for expenditure in the sanctioned Budget Estimates; and after approval by the Collector and the Conservator of Forests, the operations were started, and were carried out, with slight deviations.

### II.—WORKING OF THE YEAR.

#### (a).—COMMUNICATIONS AND BUILDINGS.

##### — (1).—Roads.

39. The Public Works Department being fully occupied upon the extensive famine relief works which had perforce to be undertaken in every division of the Circle, was not able to do anything towards the construction of any new roads that could serve the exploitation of produce from the forests.

40. From the forest budget funds an expenditure of Rs. 817 has been made in the construction of new cart tracks, and of repairs to an existing one, which penetrate reserved forests.

(1). In the East Khándesh Division Rs. 767 were spent in making cart tracks over a length of 22 miles in the Sávida and Yával Sátputa mountain forests in their northern profile, in order to open out a grass-producing region of about 70 square miles, which had hitherto been closed against wheeled transport, and from which grass had never been exploited before, for the purpose of extracting grass for supply to famine-affected districts outside Khándesh; this road enabled the grass of the left Aner Valley in the Sávida and Yával Sátputa hills to be carted to the Ráver railway station, G. I. P. Railway, where a steam press, and several hand-presses were employed in compressing and baling hay; and the road will be very useful in future years for the extraction of timber, bámbus and other forest produce on carts, which hitherto have been unable to get into this wild and difficult part of the country. The greater portion of the outlay has, however, been debited to famine grass operations.

(2). Rs. 50 have been spent on the annual repairs to the Kalambari forest road in the Pimpalner Range of the West Khándesh Division.

(2).—*Buildings.*

41. A Range Forest Office with a seed room was built in the Mámlatdár's kacheri at Nevása in the Ahmednagar Division, at a cost of Rs. 2,167. Additions and alterations to existing buildings were made, as detailed below, under the sanction given by the Conservator of Forests from the discretionary grant placed at his disposal by Government :—

No.	Executive Officer.	Nature and locality of work.	Amount sanctioned.
			Rs.
1	Executive Engineer, Khándesh...	Additions and alterations to the Range Forest Office at Bhadgaon.	97
2	Do. Sátára ...	Putting tiles over the corrugated iron roof of the Range Forest Office at Tásgaon.	54
3	Do. do. ...	Making additions and alterations to the Range Forest Office at Malcolmpeth.	447
4	Do. Sholápur ...	Providing a weather board to the window of the Range Forest Office at Sholápur.	5
5	Do. Sátára ...	Additions and alterations to the Range Forest Office at Sátára.	21
6	Do. do. ...	Additions and alterations to the Range Forest Office at Shirála.	54
7	Do. do. ...	Do. do. at Tásgaon ...	42
8	Do. do. ...	Do. do. at Wái ...	55
9	Do. do. ...	Do. do. at Waduj ...	134
10	Do. do. ...	Do. do. at Dahivadi ...	17
11	Do. do. ...	Constructing a well with retaining wall for the Forest Bungalow at Lingmala.	473
12	Do. do. ...	Making a concrete floor to the Range Forest Office at Pátan.	43
		Total ...	1,442

(3).—*Other Works.*

42. Rs. 1,256 have been expended in the construction of wells of potable water in the wild forest tracks of the Sátputas.